

LOWER PAXTON TOWNSHIP  
PLANNING COMMISSION  
Subdivision and Land Development Ordinance Workshop  
Meeting Notes

March 21, 2007

**COMMISSIONERS PRESENT**

Fredrick Lighty  
Ernest Gingrich  
William Neff

**ALSO PRESENT**

Dianne Moran, Planning & Zoning Officer  
Lori Wissler, Planning & Zoning Officer  
Chip Millard, Dauphin County  
Jim Snyder, HRG

**Call to Order**

Mr. Lighty called the workshop meeting of the Lower Paxton Township Planning Commission to order at 6:15 pm, on March 21, 2007 in Room 174 of the Lower Paxton Township Municipal Center, 425 Prince Street, Harrisburg, Pennsylvania. Please note that a quorum of members was not present, therefore no action was taken.

**Proposed Subdivision and Land Development Ordinance  
(SALDO) Review**

Pg 5-8, #6: Center Plantings in a cul-de-sac. Mr. Neff suggested if there is a 100 foot diameter cul-de-sac and a 20 foot diameter planting, the emergency vehicles should still be able to get around.

Mr. Snyder noted that boulevards are not permitted unless there is a HOA to maintain it. It can be allowed subject to having someone to maintain it, and it being large enough to accommodate large emergency vehicles.

Mr. Neff agreed with the boulevard issue. He noted that Oak Park Circle has a large cul-de-sac with a huge planting in the center. Ms. Wissler stated that each of the abutting property owners own a slice of it. Mr. Neff agreed noting that they all join in maintaining it.

Mr. Neff felt that the 100 foot cul-de-sacs with nothing in the middle are ugly. Mr. Neff asked if there is no HOA, and the island could be planted with low maintenance type of plants. Mr. Neff wanted to get away from the ugly bare cul-de-sacs. Mr. Lighty noted that low maintenance does not equal no maintenance. Mr. Lighty suggested doing the same for cul-de-sacs as we do for boulevards, and require them if there is an entity to care for them. The proposed ordinance says boulevards are prohibited unless there is someone to maintain them. Mr. Lighty would like the ordinance to say a boulevard or center planting is required if there is some entity to take care of them.

Mr. Gingrich stated that the Paxton Creek Watershed Association roundtable has recommended minimizing impervious coverage on the streets and cul-de-sacs, making them only big enough to accommodate the emergency vehicles.

Mr. Neff felt that the islands in the boulevards and cul-de-sacs would accomplish the Watershed's goals, by minimizing the pavement.

Mr. Lighty noted that in the DC suburbs they have islands with one huge tree in it instead of low plantings and it looks great.

Mr. Lighty noted that with regard to fire equipment, the important thing is getting them to the fire or emergency, getting out is not really an issue even if they back out or drive over the curb. Mr. Snyder agreed that getting the vehicles to the emergency is the priority. Mr. Neff noted that there will be parking in the cul-de-sac which will make it harder to get around too.

Mr. Millard noted that if the planting has a mountable curb the fire trucks could use that area if necessary.

Mr. Snyder summarized: minimize paving, require internal islands where we can and allow and encourage them everywhere else.

Ms. Moran noted that some cul-de-sacs are kidney shaped or other shapes, and those should be allowed too. The others agreed, noting the cul-de-sacs should be subject to the approval of the zoning officer or engineer.

Mr. Gingrich asked about the table on page 5-5, and reducing the pavement width and the right-of-way width to keep in line with the Paxton Creek Watershed. Mr. Snyder stated that a street of 32 feet will allow parking on both sides and reasonable access. Mr. Lighty stated he understands the goal of the Watershed, but was not sure if it should be reduced. Mr. Snyder stated it could be reduced somewhat. In Swatara Township they have 30 foot streets and allow parking on both sides, which does make it a little tight, but that really slows down the traffic.

Mr. Neff noted that 30 feet is standard for street width. The larger homes have longer driveways and tend to park on the street less. The higher density areas have more on-street parking, like in Kings Crossing. Mr. Neff noted that in Chelsey Park they have the cut-outs for on-street parking on their narrow streets and they get buried in snow.

Mr. Snyder stated the minimums can be in the table, and alternate design types may be entertained at the sole discretion of the Township under of the modification of requirements procedure, based on the type and intensity of the development.

Mr. Neff asked about the soil types, and if we use the soil types mapped by the County. Mr. Snyder noted that it is important to know if the soils where the streets are being built are adequate. If it is not, you have to build measures to stabilize the soils. Mr. Neff asked if that has been a problem.

Mr. Snyder did not feel it was. Mr. Neff noted that some of the very old roads are built up in the center and lower on the sides.

Mr. Snyder stated that section 5 deals with developments abutting poor quality streets and it gives an opportunity to have that road improved, by finding out the condition of the roadway and if anything is necessary to bring it up to standard.

Some of the peer comments feel that the roads are Township roads and the Township should fix them.

Mr. Lighty felt that it is important to get improvements that help the community, but was concerned that there may be things that are costly and do not gain anything, noting that the developer will pay for it, but he will pass the costs onto those buying the houses.

Page 5-9, F.1. Mr. Lighty asked if the TND alley widths are from ASHTO. Mr. Snyder answered that they should be, and are around 14-15 feet wide. Mr. Lighty stated that the cartway is 14 and the right-of-way is 20 feet, and asked how far back the garages are set back. Mr. Snyder stated the right-of-way part of the road would just be the apron into the garage. Mr. Lighty stated the garages should be as close to the alley as possible so they do not park in the alley.

Mr. Millard questioned the limit of 24 homes accessed by a cul-de-sac. Mr. Snyder stated that the rationale behind it is to limit the number of homes using one access point. Mr. Millard asked about the loop road or road with a loop inside, with all of the units on the road accessing one point of ingress/egress. Mr. Millard asked if that is something that the Township desires. Mr. Snyder agreed that point should be looked at. Interconnecting developments is also affected by this regulation. Mr. Lighty liked interconnecting developments. Mr. Millard noted that if developments are connected, it takes some of the traffic off the main streets causing them less wear and tear, reducing the need for maintenance which will ultimately be a benefit to the Township.

Mr. Gingrich suggested that curves be added in the definitions section. Ms. Moran asked about the driveway paving requirements. Mr. Snyder stated that the proposed ordinance now requires that all driveways be paved, not just the first 50 feet as in the current ordinance.

Ms. Moran asked if brick pavers are considered pavement. Mr. Snyder answered yes. The question is if the requirement should be for some portion of the driveway to be paved and what the benefits are. It keeps the dirt and stone off the street. Mr. Neff suggested that if the lot is of a certain size it could be exempt from this requirement. Mr. Snyder agreed that it would still require the standard subdivisions to have entirely paved driveways. The length that has to be paved would have to be greater than the likely scenarios in a typical sfd development.

Page 5-14 Section J.1. Mr. Lighty stated that there will need to be a TND exception, because ASHTO has different sight distances and sight triangles for TNDs. Mr. Snyder stated that there is a TND exemption in Section M.1, on Page 5-17, that says the Township may waive certain street design standards, which applies to Article 5. Mr. Lighty was concerned that this will create a very long list of

waiver requests which may be viewed by citizens as special treatment. Mr. Snyder asked if Mr. Lighty wanted a by-right statement. Mr. Lighty answered yes, because the procedure needs to be different. For example, if they meet the criteria for TND these regulations do not apply. Mr. Snyder stated it is important to protect against bad design. If a TND plan came in and was poorly done and there are no regulations in the ordinance that apply, the Township would be stuck. Mr. Lighty suggested an application process that is discretionary to the Board. Ms. Wissler suggested one TND waiver. Mr. Lighty agreed, noting that since it is a waiver, it is at the discretion of the Board, so if the design is below what the Township expects, the Supervisors have the ability to not grant the waiver.

Mr. Lighty noted that that portion of the ordinance needs its own section, and needs to be moved closer to the top of the hierarchy.

Mr. Snyder asked what would be waived. It has to be done procedurally correct, in case an aggrieved property owner might want to appeal. The waiver would need to include Article 5, but also other sections including easements. Mr. Snyder stated he was trying to avoid writing an entire Article for the TND design standards, since this Township will probably see three at the most. Mr. Lighty noted it might be less work to create an article rather than figure out what all has to be waived.

Mr. Millard noted that there could be a separate article since there is a separate article for trailer parks, and there are none in the Township. Mr. Snyder stated that has to be included according to MPC.

Page 5-14, Section 3. Mr. Neff wanted to see the clear sight triangle be clearly stated with respect to arterial and collector streets, such as at Colonial Road. Mr. Snyder stated that issue is dealt with in Section J-1, Sight Distance. J-3 discusses the clear sight triangle only.

Section 505 Blocks. Mr. Snyder noted that some of the peer review comments felt that the 400 foot blocks were too long and should correspond to the intersection separation distance, which would make them 300 feet. Mr. Lighty asked what the rationale was behind a minimum block size. Mr. Snyder stated it keeps the intersections from being too close together, and two lots fit reasonably back to back. Mr. Snyder felt the change was reasonable.

Section 507 Lighting. Mr. Lighty questioned the site lighting requirements. Mr. Snyder suggested that "as described herein" should be added after "adequate site lighting ..." The group agreed.

Mr. Lighty noted that a judge or lawyer will interpret regulations numbered first as taking precedence over something numbered later if there is a conflict. Mr. Snyder noted that the specific takes precedence over the general.

Section 508 Sidewalks. Mr. Neff asked the width requirement for sidewalks. Mr. Snyder stated the width is covered by Article 9 which says 4 feet wide for residential and 5 feet wide for commercial. Mr. Neff questioned if something should be different since many plans that are submitted request a waiver, and more are waived than are required to install them. Mr. Lighty felt that sidewalks

need to be decided on a case-by-case basis. Mr. Neff asked if there should be a list of exceptions in the ordinance. Mr. Lighty did not think so since there are so many reasons why a developer could request them, and it is up to the applicant to convince the Board of Supervisors that a waiver is justified. Mr. Lighty felt that there are some roads that people should not walk along with or without sidewalks because they are not safe. Mr. Snyder felt that if there was a sidewalk it would be a safer place to walk than with no sidewalks. Mr. Millard noted that it is also related to what sort of pedestrian generators will be nearby, and how close they are to the location in question. Mr. Millard noted that if there is a decent shoulder width, pedestrians will safely walk there.

Mr. Snyder noted that as an alternative to sidewalks, developers can install pedestrian pathways, and the Greenway Committee is trying to tie greenways and pathways into subdivision and land development.

Section 509 Curbing. Mr. Lighty felt slant curbing was preferred over vertical curbing. Those present agreed, noting that public works prefers vertical curbing because of overlaying the roadway.

Section 511 Water Supply Facilities. Ms. Wissler noted that the peer reviews generated comments on this section noting that United Water is responsible for water line design and will not provide that until final plan approval is obtained. Mr. Snyder stated that the water design is done by United Water, but they will not do the detail until the plan is approved, however the Township has interest in knowing where the water lines, hydrants, et cetera, will be located on the subdivision plan, from both a planning standpoint and also demonstrating hydrant spacing. The SALDO does not say United Water has to design it, it says that the facilities have to be shown on the plan. Mr. Snyder stated that a developer can go to United Water and have preliminary discussions with them and get the plan very close to where the lines will actually go. The reasons this is important are for avoiding conflict with other infrastructure, stormwater drainage, et cetera. The water company will design the water system to benefit their interests, but the Township wants it designed to benefit everyone involved. Mr. Lighty asked if this would put more burden on the land owner. Mr. Snyder did not feel it would. Mr. Lighty suggested Mr. Snyder talk to United Water so the Township doesn't inadvertently stick the homeowner in the middle. Mr. Snyder stated something will have to be worked out with the water company or the language in the ordinance will have to be softened.

Section 514 Floodplains. Mr. Fisher's comments say that this requires costly and burdensome study work. The other peers also felt it was burdensome. Mr. Snyder explained that if there is more than 50 acres or 20 lots the stream gets studied so it is known where the actual floodway and floodplain are. Mr. Lighty asked why that is useful. Mr. Snyder stated that it is useful for when there are structures proposed nearby, and not necessarily when there is a stream on the corner of a lot 1,000 feet away from the structures.

Landscaping Section. Mr. Snyder stated this section was reviewed by the Shade Tree Commission and he met with Dr. Norman Lacasse regarding their review. He has made some changes according to their comments on street trees, landscaping buffers, interior parking lot landscaping buffers, screens and perimeter plantings. Mr. Lighty stated that the trees he sees in parking lots look crappy and asked if this section will make that not happen in the future. Ms. Wissler stated there is no

list of acceptable trees, however the shade tree commission will review the plan and guide the applicant to the most appropriate trees.

Section 516. Mr. Fisher thought the requirement to do an engineered study to determine what traffic control signs are necessary was unnecessary until now. Mr. Snyder stated that the Township has to have an engineered study to demonstrate which signs are necessary. Ms. Wissler noted that the Police Department determines what signs are necessary currently. This is a PennDOT requirement. Mr. Snyder will check this section further.

Mr. Millard asked if the traffic signals in a corridor has to be coordinated, noting that PennDOT will be requiring this soon. Mr. Snyder stated that in Article 9 there is language about coordinating traffic signals.

Section 517. The peer review comments questioned the underground utilities noting that they may not be practical in all instances.

Section B.2. the current ordinance requires two monuments, this proposed SALDO requires many more, at intersections, perimeter of the property, at changes in direction along the streets. Each of the peer reviews had concerns about this section. Mr. Lighty asked if this would be a good place to get virtual monuments or GPS coordinates. Mr. Snyder stated that all surveys are based on the State plain system and require primary control points, identification of all property corners within the State plain system. The monument just physically marks the corner, but it also has a coordinate assigned to it.

Section 521 Natural Preservation. The peer review comments felt this section was excessive. Mr. Snyder noted that the zoning ordinance requires a 75 foot or 100 foot buffer area for streams, and agreed that that is probably excessive. These should not conflict.

Section 522 Dedication of recreational land and fee requirements. The fee is set by resolution, but also has to be based upon a study. Mr. Snyder added that if that money is not used in three years, the Township has to give it back to the developer. Mr. Lighty asked how that is accounted for. Ms. Wissler stated that there used to be five districts and where the money came in is where it was spent. The only requirement is that the money be spent within three years. Mr. Snyder noted that it has to be based upon a recreation plan, and the money has to be spent on new construction of new facilities, and not maintenance.

Article 6. This section has been reviewed by the Dauphin County Conservation District and they felt it was fine.

Section 613. Mr. Fisher questioned the use of section endwalls instead of concrete. Mr. Snyder agreed, noting that concrete end sections are the best, and the other types may not perform as well.

Section 614. Mr. Fisher questioned the use of showing it on both the plan and the profile. Mr. Snyder agreed that is a good point and should be changed. The length and slope do not need to be shown on the plan.

General: Mr. Lighty requested a section number and page number for each topic in the table of contents. The group agreed and Mr. Snyder will work on it.

Mr. Snyder stated that several sets of comments did come back from the peers and he and staff will work through them to see if there are common issues that need to be addressed.

Page 6-22, Section H.8. One of the engineers asked if this applies to detention basins designed to infiltrate. Mr. Snyder stated he will add a sentence similar to the one in section H.7 for basins not designed to infiltrate.

Section H.10. An engineer asked why RCP is necessary. (Reinforced concrete pipe) Mr. Snyder stated it is necessary because it is bigger and better. Ms. Wissler asked what they would use if they did not use RCP. Mr. Snyder stated it would be metal or plastic pipes.

Section 621.A. An engineer recommends that the drainage plan be incorporated into the subdivision or land development plan rather than a stand alone submittal. Mr. Snyder stated it is not separate, it is submitted with the plan like a stormwater plan accompanies the plan. It will no longer be a sheet in the plan, it is a report. Mr. Snyder read the definition for "Drainage Plan".

Mr. Neff asked if the drainage plan gets submitted with the preliminary plan or the final plan. Mr. Snyder stated it gets submitted in the preliminary plan, or the preliminary/final plan. Mr. Neff noted that the way it is written it sounds like there is a choice to do it in the preliminary or the final. Mr. Snyder stated that in the section dealing with plan content it says that a stormwater management drainage plan addressing the requirements in Article 6 is required for a preliminary plan submission. It also says it is required in the final plan submission.

Mr. Gingrich noted that the appendices following page 6-49 should be listed and labeled individually in the table of contents. Mr. Snyder agreed and will do that.

In the list of exhibits, Mr. Gingrich suggested changing the date format from 200\_ to 20\_\_ to allow for more years. Mr. Snyder agreed. Mr. Gingrich noted that Exhibit 8 should be moved to page 5-14. Mr. Snyder agreed and will move it.

Page 9-13, Section 905.C. Mr. Gingrich noted that it says that slant curb and rolled curb are not permitted. That will be changed to say that vertical and slant curb are the acceptable types of curbing. Those present agreed that vertical and slant curb are the only types they want to allow as Township standards. Other types include rolled, bituminous curb, Belgian block, granite, and a waiver would be required to use those types of curb. Mr. Snyder cautioned that if the other types are also allowed, you have to define them by construction standards and detailing, however vertical curb and slant curb are already defined by PennDOT. Rolled curb is in Devon Manor and look like a

combination of curb plus gutter. Slant curb has a straight face with a 1½ inch reveal. Rolled curb has no reveal at all so there will be no overlay pavings, whereas with slant curb you can get one or two overlays before having to mill the road.

Mr. Millard asked if the threshold of 100 peak hour trips was too high of a number in a traffic study. Mr. Snyder stated that 100 is the standard, but the Township could have a more stringent ordinance. Mr. Millard noted that the more interconnectivity in the Township, the less that would matter.

Section 903.B.8. One of the peer reviews had serious concerns about this section and recommend it be deleted given the extent of the design criteria and the inspection procedures outlined in the new ordinance there should be no limitations placed on when the wearing surface can be placed. It is also counter to the provisions in 305.A which allows an owner to install improvements in-lieu-of posting securities prior to final plan approval. We also feel it is discriminating against a homeowner who purchases early in a phase in that the street cannot be finished whereby the homeowner does not benefit from snow plowing, school bus services, traffic improvements, et cetera. Mr. Snyder stated this is a good point, and explained that if a developer builds a phase and dedicates the road to the township, and then proceeds to continue construction using that road heavily. The way to avoid that is to not allow the wearing surface on the street and the Township will not accept the street until X% of the units are built. That way the wear and tear is on the developer. However, the engineer's comment is a good point, noting that the developer could, in theory, put in all the improvements in the preliminary plan. If someone buys the first house, they then have to wait for a percentage of the other houses before they get any of the improvements. Mr. Neff noted it is better to have that heavy compression on the base coat, and wait on the top coat. Mr. Snyder stated they can force the developer to build it, maintain it and plow it, but cannot force school busses to use it. Mr. Lighty stated that busses will use private streets, and there is no reason a fire truck or ambulance would not use a private street. Mr. Neff noted it might make the developer use smaller phases. Mr. Snyder stated that smaller phases benefit the residents, not the Township.

### **Adjournment**

The Planning Commission will meet in workshop session with the Board of Supervisors on March 27, 2007 for a joint discussion on the draft Subdivision and Land Development Ordinance at 5:30pm in Room 174 of the Lower Paxton Township Municipal Center, with a light meal at 5:00 pm.

Being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 10:15pm.

Respectfully Submitted,

Michelle Hiner  
Recording Secretary